

# Christianity and Crisis

*A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion*

Vol. IV, No. 22

December 25, 1944

\$1.50 per year; 10 cents per copy

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## The Victory of Light

**I**T is, as has often been remarked, no mere coincidence that the Christian Church celebrates the birth of the Saviour just at the turn of the year, when the days grow longer and men's hearts respond with gladness to the victory of light over darkness. The Church apparently took over and Christianized the almost universal pagan celebrations of the Winter Solstice. In Rome, lights and processions proclaimed on December 25th, the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. The festivities followed the wild week of the Saturnalia. The day, for all its excesses, was one of light and hope.

Now it is in Rome that somewhere about 300 years after Christ, we find the same date fixed for the nativity of the Lord. Its appropriateness, since no one knew the real date, is obvious. Here in late December each year is a victory. The powers of darkness are beaten. The sun has not struggled in vain. The fight is won. Light, gladness, hope, are come back to men. Ah! but that, ran the thought of those eager Christian souls, is just what is happening in the world. Men had been groping in the dark. They knew not which way to turn. The mystery gods had failed to light the way. Mithra, Isis, Dionysus—it was only a dim winter light they threw upon the path. The ancient city gods had failed. Even the great Pallas Athene cried to men in vain. They found no wisdom there. The world groped in darkness. But now, light had come.

We cannot get the full meaning of Christmas to those Christians of long ago, unless we see it against this background of the growing darkness of the pagan world. It had been but a feeble flickering little lamp, there in Bethlehem. But as the years passed, no little lamp could be a symbol of what had happened in the world. From Palestine a radiance like that of early dawn had been spreading. It touched the dark clouds; it filtered through the leaves of the dark forests where men stumbled and fell. Paths began to be clear. One and then another and now a myriad souls were no longer groping. They saw the way.

The Western Church, meditating on these things, knew that the turn of the centuries had come. What could be surer than that the birthday of the Uncon-

quered Sun must in some deep mystic fashion be the moment when the little lamp first sent out its feeble rays in Bethlehem. No one knows just how the transition was made there in 4th Century Rome. But the logic of religion, its poetry, and imagination seems to have made the date inevitable. Nowhere in the circling months could any other moment be found for the advent of the Sun of Light and Truth and Love—the Sun of Righteousness, they called Him.

Christmas Day, like the other great festivals of the Church, is a day of victory. Light triumphs over darkness. It is and it should be a day of merriment, of the children's joy, and of the humble, simple things of life. But just as back of all those simple things lies the faith that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, so likewise lies the faith that the powers of darkness have been beaten and that the eternal light of God shines now in sure and certain victory.

In Christ the turn of the centuries had come. Men groping through the ages for light upon their path need grope no longer. The light shines. If they do not see it, their own dim sight, their very blindness is the cause. It is hard for us for whom the light has shown so long to realize the stupendous experience of those who came out of the darkness into its brilliant splendor. They did not, indeed they could not, see all that it meant, but it showed them the way to the freedom and the dignity of man, the necessity of his life in the community under the supremacy of love, his relation to the transcendent God of heaven and earth and therefore, the momentous quality of all life. These, one might say, are the colors which fuse into the bright white light which shines from Bethlehem. The groping world about the Mediterranean saw it first. North and East and West it shone and men accepted it. Across the ocean to the new world, and now in the "marvelous" century just past and in our own day, it shines and is seen over all the world.

The light has come through the clouds pretty dimly at times. That in less figurative language, means that the Christian Church has failed. Sometimes it has lost the spirit of those who know that

victory is assured. Sometimes it has sought to conquer position and power rather than the darkness which falls upon the souls of men and nations. Sometimes its very light has been darkness. And yet, in spite of all the Church's failures, the Unconquered Sun has risen higher and higher.

In these momentous days, the question facing the Church and the world is the same old question: Will men open their eyes and see that light and proclaim the victory of the Sun of Righteousness and Justice and Love? We need in the settlements before us, the wisdom of those wise old Greeks, the genius of those competent old Romans; but we need still more, faith in the victory of light, certainty of the path along which the light shone in Bethlehem long ago. We need at this Christmas time the conviction that the birthday of the Lord is a day of Victory.

Light from God has conquered the darkness.

So sure were they of this back in those early days that they could even fancy that through the victory of the Light which shone from Bethlehem, the very sun in heaven won its struggle with darkness. Prudentius put it quaintly: "How is it that the sun now leaves its narrowed way? Is it not that Christ, shedding ever-increasing light, is born on earth?"

E. L. P.

## Editorial Notes

A real development toward political maturity is apparent in the reactions of internationalists toward the tentative program of Dumbarton Oaks. The Dumbarton Oaks plan of world organization is less ideally conceived than the old League of Nations. Yet there is a greater disposition to accept it in principle, despite its weaknesses, than was evident toward the League a quarter century ago. It is more fully recognized now, than it was then, that America does not have some ideal vantage point from which it can choose whether to stay out of or go into a system of world security. It is realized that America must under all circumstances fulfill its obligations toward the world community. It must do this even if the accord that is agreed upon is only minimal.

The Dumbarton Oaks plan contains many dangers. It does not give the small nations enough power and security; and it is to be hoped that they will object to their disfranchisement with sufficient vigor to secure better terms. Furthermore the plan envisages regional arrangements which may easily become mere spheres of influence of each of the great powers. The perils in the plan are many. They must be measured in terms of the fact that the plan is an effort to overcome the chasm between

Russia and the West. If this is not accomplished, even the most ideal constitutional arrangement will not prevent a third world war.

The great nations have too much power under the plan. But the fact that the initial peace of the world must be secured by giving the great nations responsibilities commensurate with their power is fully recognized in this plan as it was not in the old League. The acceptance of this fact by international idealists represents a new appreciation of the importance of historical forces in contrast to purely abstract ideals.

The American Army and Navy are going to curious lengths in prohibiting fraternization with Germans in occupied areas. An order on this subject of the Twelfth U. S. Fleet declares that "the Germans are basically a disciplined people who have a deep respect for things military." The order forbids talking with Germans, except on official business, visiting in their homes, shaking hands with them or walking with them on the streets. One reason for the order is to "impress the Germans with the finality of their defeat." The most fantastic part of these orders is that in many cases at least they are made applicable to children as well as adults.

The idea that the Germans, who have long since lost some of their respect for military discipline as they were driven to exasperation by the cruelties of their various military police, should be impressed by the finality of their defeat merely because American soldiers behave with the same lack of humane feeling as their own Gestapo, is rather fantastic. The army must of course have strict rules about fraternization so that soldiers do not become the victims of spies among the civilian population. But when the rules go beyond these military requirements and seek to encompass political ends, they are obviously self-defeating. Wouldn't it be better politics to disprove Dr. Goebbels' propaganda about the cruelty of our soldiers?

R. N.

### Christianity and Crisis Presents in Near Future:

*The Christian Attitude to Economic Reconstruction in Great Britain*, by The Rev. Eric W. Brewin; *What Is the War Doing to Civilians?* by Seward Hiltner. Also reports from Europe and Asia by Henry Smith Leiper, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, Oscar Lange and Elmer K. Higdon. Discussions on problems which face the American Church and the nation by Galen M. Fisher, Helen Hill Miller, Carl Mayer, Paul S. Heath and Theodore O. Wedel.

# Which Is Called Bethlehem

W. RUSSELL BOWIE

I HAVE never been to Bethlehem. I am not quite sure that I want to go. There are some places in the Holy Land which I do deeply desire to see. But the real Bethlehem I do not think that I could ever see—save as I have already seen it. For if one goes to Bethlehem today, he will look upon a white-walled town upon a hill, not obviously different from many other Eastern towns. He will see the current of our present life flowing through its streets; but he will not see here and there at its gates a Roman sentinel, as he might have seen in the distant century when the decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed, and men and women were coming there to Bethlehem to obey the imperial edict. He will not see a crowded inn which once was there, and by its side a stable. Nor will he see, as dusk falls upon the road that leads toward Bethlehem the tired figures of Joseph the carpenter and Mary of Nazareth, nor catch again the look of ineffable wonder deep within her eyes.

But all this which no physical vision could behold today in Palestine millions of Christians by God's grace can behold in their imagination. We listen to the Christmas music, and it is like a prelude for the rising of the curtain upon a scene that is immortal. The veils of the intervening years drift apart like a mist. Time dissolves into nothing, and that which once was in Bethlehem lives again. There in the winter's night the little Child Jesus born of Mary is cradled in the manger. There on the fields outside are the kneeling shepherds transfigured by their vision of the singing angels. And there presently, with the tinkling bells upon their camels' harness telling of their approach, will come the wise men from the East, bringing their mystic gifts of adoration. Wherever we may be, and however the calendars may turn, this Bethlehem is ours forever.

In that beautiful and familiar name of the little town there is significance. Apparently, Bethlehem meant "the House of Bread." I think it is not an irrelevant matter that the birth of Jesus was thus associated with the town whose name is the House of Bread. The love of God, of which his birth was the supreme expression, is not indifferent to our simple and basic human needs. Jesus himself was no aloof ascetic. One of the first petitions in the prayer he taught his disciples is, "Give us this day our daily bread." He loved all the familiar and friendly contacts with people which are most instinctively made when men sit down to eat their food together. Read the Gospels, and see how often in even their brief story there is mention of Jesus going to this or that house to dine—to Simon Peter's house

at Capernaum, to the wedding feast at Cana, to Matthew the Publican's, to the house of Zaccheus, to Mary's and Martha's house at Bethany, to the house of Simon the Pharisee, to the upper room in Jerusalem with his disciples at the very end, and even after his resurrection to the house of the two disciples at Emmaus, where he was known in the breaking of bread. He was never indifferent either to human need or to human happiness. His life had a lovely balance and roundedness such as few of the world's great creators of religions have ever approached. He moved in two worlds at once, and yet without ever seeming to be less, but rather more a participant in this one. He had about him the power of an endless life, and yet he gave himself so intimately and so completely to the homely human contacts that the simplest matters of everyday existence were made beautiful. When he wanted to illustrate the meaning of the kingdom of God, he spoke of the sower scattering the grain that would ripen into the wheat harvest, of a woman kneading leaven into the meal, and of a man at the end of a journey knocking at his friend's house for bread. With him religion never seemed to be remote. As he looked at men's efforts to gain their livelihood, he said "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." He did not want them to be anxious nor to struggle as those who think that everything depends on their own fret and tension. But he himself had lived and worked in Nazareth, and he knew the practical necessities on which life rests. The love of God understands these things, he said, and God cares. And if His children are obedient to His purpose, He will provide.

It is right, therefore, that we should keep Christmas with the whole man. Sometimes religious teachers fall into the error of separating two things which rightly belong together in a great completeness. It is made to seem as though going to church and listening to sermons at Christmas were religion, and as though all the instinctive festivities in people's homes were only worldliness. But that is not true. It is a deep instinct, and a religious one also, which makes men and women reach out for joyfulness at Christmas. Of course, this instinct may be distorted and abused. It may be capitalized by those miserable and sordid human interests which are ready to take advantage of even the loveliest things of life for nothing but their own gain. Christmas may be travestied, and its essential sacredness blasphemed by the flood of liquor advertising that now fills our newspapers and dares to cover this under the cloak of Christmas joy. Christmas may become for many a time of dissipation and of gluttony. But this is



merely the exaggeration and abuse of what at its best can be beautiful. The ancient customs of the Christmas feast, with the light and warmth and plenty, are spiritually in tune with the joyous note of him who was born in Bethlehem, the House of Bread. Let us be glad then for every instinctive and simple happiness which Christmas brings, — for Christmas lights and Christmas holly, for Christmas dinners and all friendly gatherings, and for this time, even if it be only a little time, in which within the glow of the Christmas candles no shadow of anxiety or perplexity may come. But let these all be permeated by an awareness which is religious. Let us be thanking God that this world in which He has put us is friendly at its heart; that He has given us rain and sun, and all the richness of the fruitful earth; that He has taught us how to build houses and to make homes out of them; that He has shown us the meaning of friendship and of love, and has taught us how we can make life forever sweet.

But it follows also without much saying that our Christmas joy must not be selfish. There is always the possibility that we shall romanticize about the poverty of Bethlehem, and do this, not for ourselves, but with very convenient piety for someone else. People who have abundance for themselves may be complacently satisfied that the poor should remain poor, and feel their consciences at ease if at Christmas-time they have given to the poor a few charities from their abundance. But that certainly is not the suggestion which shines in the fact that Jesus was born in a town that was called the House of Bread. That love of God which came to earth in him desires that all life should be a House of Bread. It is no use trying to preach Christianity to men and women in economic degradation and despair. It is no use hoping that the spirit of Jesus can be born in our modern world in the midst of multitudes suffering from a sense of injustice and of deprivation. Our duty and our opportunity as Christians range much farther than the matter of personal generousities at Christmas-time. They reach out to include the whole question of our relationships toward the building of a kinder and more spacious social order in which the desperate inequalities of today shall be done away with.

When we think of the House of Bread, and of the suggestions which that name conveys, let us not be too severely practical. Sometimes we act and speak as though all that people can really need is the basic necessities. Those of us who have no imagination are often impatient at what we choose to call the "extravagance of the poor." Men and women who have every luxury and refinement of life seem sometimes to grudge even the least of these to other human beings who have exactly the same instincts as themselves. If somebody living in a tenement spends on some pathetic bit of finery the money which theo-

retically ought to have gone into the stark necessities of food and rent, there are always those who will condemn him utterly. But surely at Christmas-time we can understand the hunger of the human heart for a little beauty and release. In a recent Christmas number of that poignant little leaflet of the Community Service Society, there was an article which quotes from a note the Society received, enclosing a gift for a little boy at Christmas. "Please, please," says the writer of the note, "don't make this gift too practical. Little boys must have something at Christmas besides warm undershirts." And another article in the same bulletin told of a little girl who had dim but precious memories of a time before her father and mother had been sucked down into poverty, when, as a baby beginning to walk, she knew a garden where flowers grew. She was five years old now, and she still had her wistful love of flowers, and the story in the bulletin concluded thus: "What if she could have a real Christmas, a bulky stocking hanging by her bed on Christmas morning, and a doll with yellow curls, and maybe—a red rose!"

But the Bethlehem which is the promise of the birth of the love of God in Jesus is not a House of Bread only in the physical sense. It is the House of that Living Bread which feeds all that is fullest in men's souls.

We know, of course, how surely Jesus made that distinction. "Man shall not live by bread alone," he said, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He knew then, and he would know now, that no satisfaction of economic wants, vital, urgent, and primary though these be, can ultimately feed the best in our human life. If we are able to create, as we must try to do, a social order in which every decent family can have a decent home, and in which every child can grow up in security and happiness, and with some sufficient taste of the physical beauty of this earth, even then we should not have reached fulfilment. The proof of that is in the multitude of houses—one may not truly call them homes—where there is everything that money can command, and yet no joy. People may have the wealth of Croesus to live on; but if they do not know how to live, life will grow bitter, disillusioned, and despairing. The most conspicuous suicides we read about are not due to the lack of outward resources but to the lack of resources within. As in Dickens' immortal story of *A Christmas Carol*, the tiny house of Bob Cratchit could be a heaven of life and love, and the palace of many a multimillionaire can be as gaunt as a prison in which some mordant soul broods in the blackness of his own spiritual entombment. No; it is by subtler ways than anything material that the House of Bread becomes the House of Life.

It is the House of Life if it is a House of Love. Thank God for that. If the place which you call

home is rich with memories of innumerable sweet relationships, then it is alive with something which can never die. If children have grown up there in happiness, if love has flowered there, then you may possess something beyond the reach of time or change. Remember that in your heart today. It may be that many outward things have changed for you since last year or a few years ago; things which used to seem to be the substance of happiness may have dropped away. Yet these facts of outward difficulty and of readjustment may throw you back upon a deeper and surer sense of those values of life which are supreme. If you can think today of faces into whose eyes you can look without reproach; if you

know that there are those for whose sake you have followed some steady ideal of faithfulness and devotion; if you know that there are those whom you can utterly trust, and by whom you will be trusted to the end; then you know that something of the meaning of God has come into your existence which is as real as the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. You remember that one of those who understood the heart of Jesus best has written, "everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; for God is love." And to the extent that you have loved, your circle of existence in this world becomes indeed a House of Bread which feeds your spirit with enduring joy.

## The Church and the War

THE Commission on the Relation of the Church to the War in the Light of the Christian Faith appointed two years ago by the Federal Council of Churches has made its report. The Commission, of which Professor Robert Calhoun was the chairman, and which included four members of the editorial committee of *Christianity and Crisis*, was able to make a unanimous report on the main religious and theological issues involved. This was an extraordinary achievement in view of the wide range of convictions represented on the Commission. Differences appear in the discussion of the support of and participation in war by Christians but this issue in this particular study was subordinate. "A majority of the Commission," as the report says, "believe that today war against the Axis powers, by all needful measures, is in fact justified." A minority (slightly less than a third as may be inferred from the publicly known views of most of the members) adhere to the pacifist position. It is important to emphasize that the primary purpose of the report was to deal with a deeper level of problems for Christian faith than the problem of participation *versus* non-participation in war. This report may well be an important landmark in the development of an ecumenical theology in America. The whole report, a document of seventy-five pages, is too long for publication here. A summary would have little value. Accordingly, we are publishing paragraphs on two subjects: (1) God's Judgment in the War and (2) War-time Manifestations of Religion.

### *God's Judgment in the War*

*Divine judgment in the war can be plainly seen at two levels. First, as we have noted, there is a natural and moral order of creation that God maintains against all man's wayward efforts in peace and in war. For human persons, that order has special significance in these respects: that every man is in his essential nature a responsible person, as well as a natural being;*

that all men are interdependent, as well as dependent upon their natural environment with its network of causal processes; and that the primary demand upon every man in this situation is love, for God, for men as children of God, and for nature as man's temporal home. Man may act, in both peace and war, as though these primary conditions of his life did not exist, but they hold fast and his denials in thought and act bring calamity upon himself, his fellows, and his natural home. *Divine judgment is not vengeful. It is inexorable. And in war, more vividly than in quieter times, men can see its fearful majesty.* In times when human conflict operates below the threshold of armed warfare, men sow with busy hands the winds of private and public aggression or negligence, of headstrong ignorance or cunning treachery. In times of open warfare, they reap the hurricane of outraged human life and divine power. In a terrible way, the fury of war vindicates the existence and inescapability of divine law.

*Secondly, God's judgment in war times negates not merely the selfish conduct of men, but also their inadequate ideals for living.* There are many of our accustomed ways of action that we are ready to acknowledge to be wrong, even though usually we hope that the fitting penalty for them may somehow be escaped. But other ways of ours seem to us surely right, and the ideals we hold often seem to us beyond criticism. It is hard not to think we know what is right even when we do otherwise. Service to one's country, or to one's church, for example, seems surely right, and the ideal of patriotism or of church loyalty that moves us in our most devoted moments seems wholly good. Precisely at these points of human self-confidence the judgment of God cuts deep. The very group loyalty in which we take pride and find a basis for self-righteousness is shown up in the fierce light of warfare to be tintured with deadly poison. For uncritical group loyalty is a potent source of war, it helps to intensify hatred while war goes on, it is most characteristic of the more aggressive and tyrannous nations in the present war, and it can retard for generations our attempts to establish a peaceful world when this war has run its course. The judgment of God writ large in war-time says: "Patriotism is not enough." Human right-



eousness at any level thus far achieved is not enough. That is true in times of comparative quiet. It becomes glaringly evident in times of war.

*Is then war itself to be called "a divine judgment," or an instrument thereof? Does God decree war to punish the waywardness of men? We have said no. War is not divinely ordained, any more than slums or slavery. God's will is always that men shall live at peace with one another and with Him. This is true at all times and without any exception. This refers not simply to armed warfare. It is not God's will that men shall carry on covert strife with one another, and with Him, under the name of peace. When that is done, His will is already being violated, and the outbreak of open war makes that fact plain. It is not God's will that war shall come upon mankind, at any time, nor that it be regarded as a suitable instrument for good. It is God's will that the primary order of natural and human life be maintained, and in presence of that order some sorts of human conduct bring war. The order itself is confirmed and vindicated. The specific decisions that make war break out are man's decisions, not God's. Moreover, the specific decisions we make thereafter, in seeking to do "the right as God gives us to see the right," are still our decisions, not God's. War is not, then, "a judgment of God" in the sense that God wills it as a punishment for men. It serves to reveal and vindicate the judgment of God that upholds inexorably the order of His world even though in the presence of that order some combinations of human decision and natural causation, in resistance to God's will for peace, bring war.*

*God's judgment, in a word, is never merely punitive. Man brings down punishment when he acts in violation of God's law made dynamic by God's will. Yet that very law is even in its rigor a gift without which neither natural nor personal life could go on, and the will that maintains it is even in its unyieldingness a will to more abundant life. Divine judgment is redemptive in purpose, and it becomes so in effect, as far as men are brought by its unceasing pressures to respond in repentance and faith.*

#### *War-time Manifestations of Religion*

A striking way in which this divine work (the work of God as Holy Spirit) comes to be affirmed in war time, with varying degrees of Christian insight, is the report from many quarters of a new sense, that comes to sorely tried men, of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in hardship and peril, a sense often of supernatural help and protection. In this war, as in earlier wars, there is first-hand testimony, much of it startling, some of it very moving, with respect to the survival of hard-pressed pilots or mariners through unforeseen and powerful aid beyond known human powers. To the minds of many, these are palpable miracles in our time, like the "mighty works" that first century Christians took as signs and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our problem now, like St. Paul's then, is to keep clear the right lines of Christian conviction across an area in which human cravings and emotions are uncommonly strong. It seems to us right to affirm that to every devoted person in war-time, Christian or non-Christian, combatant or non-combatant, the presence of God offers

an accessible source of power and spiritual security. Especially through genuine prayer, however inarticulate, a human spirit is opened toward God who is never absent, and strengthened to bear rightly whatever burden must be borne. That fresh energies, beyond the shallows drawn upon in ordinary living, can be tapped under conditions of great stress has long been known, and fresh testimony to the fact is welcome. Such energies, and such guidance as the hidden perceptions within men's bodies and minds may provide in times of extreme peril or exhaustion, can indeed manifest the watchful care of the God who neither slumbers nor sleeps.

*But as in St. Paul's day, so in ours it is vital to insist that no marvel of force nor of physical guidance, not even a rescue from impending bodily death, is in itself a sufficient evidence of a special working of the Holy Spirit. The crucial test is still the old one: Is the spirit of man, in the presence of these marvels, brought closer to the pattern of the spirit of Jesus Christ? Of two men confronted by the same event, one may be moved to self-searching, humility, and new devotion, the other to self-satisfaction and arrogance. It seems not too rash to say that one has heard in rescue from peril the voice of God, the other only a magnified echo of his own.*

The difference becomes very clear in the differing attitudes of those who pray in war-time. It is good that men are moved to pray in times of especial stress, far better if they pray continually in good times and bad, both in words and in unspoken cravings and grateful impulses. We believe that the half-involuntary, unaccustomed cry for help and the calm reaffirmation of a lifelong trust are alike understood and accepted by an infinite Father. But they can scarcely be answered alike. Prayer is a mutual relationship between personal spirits and its significance and results are necessarily dependent on the characters, attitudes, and actions of both participants. We are assured that God will unfailingly provide, in answer to every one who turns to Him sincerely in prayer, the utmost of good that the attitude of the petitioner and the whole situation permit. But the good will often be very different from what the petitioner seeks. In particular, there is no warrant for expecting that God will protect from physical harm all those who call upon Him however sincerely, nor that prayers are enough to assure military victory or avert another war. Prayers for all these things can be offered, with or without Christian insight and faith. The one kind of petition, we believe, that God cannot accept as genuine prayer at all is a presumptuous and self-righteous effort to use Him and His power for human ends, chosen without regard to His will. Humble prayer for safety or for bread can be real prayer. Yet we believe that those soldiers pray best who pray in the spirit of the young officer who wrote to his family from Bataan: "My prayer each night is that God will send you His strength and peace. During the first few days of the war, I prayed also for personal protection from physical harm, but now, that I may be given strength to bear whatever I must bear, and do whatever I must do, so that those men under me will have every reasonable chance." The models for prayer in time of

trial are still the prayers in Gethsemane and on the cross: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

This report may be secured from The Federal Council of Churches for twenty-five cents; address: 297 Fourth Avenue, New York City 10, New York. The members of the Commission were as follows: Robert

L. Calhoun, Edwin E. Aubrey, Roland H. Bainton, John C. Bennett, Conrad J. I. Bergendoff, B. Harvie Branscomb, Frank H. Caldwell, Angus Dun, Nels Ferré, Robert E. Fitch, Theodore M. Greene, Georgia Harkness, Walter M. Horton, John Knox, Umphrey Lee, John A. Mackay, Benjamin E. Mays, John T. McNeill, H. Richard Niebuhr, Reinhold Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, Douglas V. Steere, Ernest F. Tittle, Henry P. Van Dusen, Theodore O. Wedel, Alexander C. Zabriskie.

## The World Church: News and Notes

### Bulgarian Government Restores S. C. M.

The Student Christian Movement in Bulgaria, outlawed by the former Nazi puppet regime, has been restored, according to information from Sofia received in Geneva by the World Council of Churches. Authority to reorganize the movement was granted church leaders by a decree of the new government headed by Premier Komon Georgiev. (RNS)

### Plans for Reorganization of German Church

German Evangelical Church leaders have drafted far-reaching plans for active cooperation with religious bodies in other countries and for participation of churches in the re-education of the German people. The proposals, which presumably will be put into effect as soon as the Nazis have been overthrown, were disclosed to Religious News Service by an authoritative European source.

They are part of a detailed postwar reorganization designed to strengthen the Evangelical Church and make it an influential force in the nation's life.

(The German Evangelical Church is the national church of Germany, comprising both Lutheran and Reformed elements. Latest information indicates there are 40,282,289 Evangelical Protestants, of which about 34,000,000 are Lutherans.)

Key feature of the proposed new set-up will be the appointment of an archbishop, or Reichbishop, of the Evangelical Church and the formation of six church departments which will be administered by executives under the archbishop's, or Reichbishop's, supervision. If the office of archbishop is created, it will be the first in the history of the Protestant Church in Germany. At present, Sweden is the only predominantly Lutheran country in Europe where such an office exists.

Relations with churches outside Germany will be handled through the foreign department, or bureau. This department is expected to occupy a major part of the head bishop's attention and for this reason another leading churchman or bishop will be assigned to assist him.

General function of the foreign bureau will be to handle relationships with the ecumenical (international church cooperation) movement, especially with an ecumenical council representing the churches. A special study center for the promotion of ecumenical thought will be formed within the church and personnel will be furnished to serve as a liaison between the Evangelical Church and inter-church aid agencies in Europe.

Adequate funds are expected to be made available through assessments on churches.

Problems of education and the restoration of the church press and religious propaganda will be dealt with by a department whose aim will be to make the German people more church-conscious.

The department will revamp the present educational set-up and prepare and carry through a widespread evangelistic missionary program. It will seek participation of churches and congregations in remodeling Germany's educational system and take steps to rebuild both the church press and other propaganda media proscribed by the Nazi government. (RNS)

### Russians Promise Non-interference with Hungarian Church Life

Church life in Hungary will not be interfered with and Hungarian pastors and priests will be permitted to carry on their activities, according to an official announcement over the Moscow radio on behalf of Soviet authorities.

Continental church circles had expressed uneasiness over the fate of churches in Russian-occupied areas of Hungary. (RNS)

### Italian Waldensians Begin Reconstruction Work

Italy's eight-century-old major Protestant sect—the Waldensians—have begun reconstruction work in liberated areas.

Foremost task is the rebuilding of church property damaged and destroyed by war.

Waldensian churches in Messina and Reggio Calabria have been demolished. Serious damage has been done to the Waldensian church and hospital in Turin and to their buildings in Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Palermo, and Milan. Two German shells fell on the Rome church on Via Quattro Novembre last year, but the extensive damage they caused has now been repaired.

Plans are under way to reopen Evangelical schools, seventeen of which were closed by the Fascists. One of these schools in Naples, with a normal enrollment of twenty, has already been reopened with 85 pupils and many more were turned away for lack of space.

Increasing the production and circulation of Evangelical literature is another Waldensian aim. Up to the present time Waldensians in liberated Italy have been unable to secure Allied permission to print a single newspaper.

# Christianity and Crisis

*A Bi-Weekly Journal of Christian Opinion*

601 West 120th St., New York 27, N. Y.

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This historic Protestant sect is also planning to raise the salaries of its pastors. Current salaries average \$25.00 a month, which is far from sufficient for food, let alone other necessities. The church has been able to continue during the war only because its pastors were willing to accept salaries of subsistence level.

The Waldensians in Italy work in full fellowship with other Protestant sects. The question of a union of the Wesleyan Methodists in Italy with the Waldensians has been discussed and such a union is in view by the end of the war. (RNS)

## Danish Underground Leader, Reported Dead, Turns Up in Sweden

Pastor Harold Sandbaek, Danish underground leader, has turned up in Sweden after having been reported killed in an Allied air attack on Aarhus, Denmark. Announcement of the clergyman's death was made by German official sources last month.

Sandbaek said he had escaped after a bombing attack had demolished Gestapo headquarters at which he was being questioned.

Declaring that "the brutality of the Gestapo surpasses all description," the Danish pastor said he had been questioned by Gestapo men for 39 hours without rest or food and that he had been cuffed constantly during the grilling. (RNS)

## Vatican Expected to Replace Ten French Bishops

Msgr. Valerio Valeri, Papal Nuncio to the former Vichy government in France, has been transferred to a post in the Vatican Secretariat of State. No announcement has yet been made as to the new Nuncio to the de Gaulle government, but it is believed that the appointment has already been settled.

It is expected also that the Vatican will replace ten French bishops charged with having collaborated with the Vichy regime.

Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, who has been in Paris for the past three weeks, reportedly to negotiate a new

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concordat with the French government, will probably remain in France until General Charles de Gaulle returns from Moscow. (RNS)

## Twenty-one Churches in Rome Hold Services in English

Services in English are available in Rome for U. S. service men in at least twenty-one churches and synagogues. In ten Roman Catholic churches, including Gesu Church and St. Alphonse Church, Masses are said by English-speaking priests who also hear confessions. Sermons and prayers in English are part of a special Mass at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City every Sunday.

Protestant troops may attend services at St. Paul's Protestant Episcopal Church, the Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church, the Church of Latter Day Saints, and the Christian Scientist Church. Jewish services are held regularly at the Jewish Synagogue on the Lungo Tevere Cenci and at the Jewish Military Synagogue on Via Balbo.

The services are listed in the army newspaper, *Stars and Stripes*, for the convenience of troops stationed in Rome or on leave in the city. (RNS)

## Reports Germans Flock to Pastors for Spiritual Reassurance

Religion has taken a new hold on the German people and pastors are besieged with callers seeking spiritual reassurance, according to an informed Swiss church leader who has just returned to Geneva from a visit to Germany.

The Swiss churchman recalled an interview with a German pastor who, he said, has traveled widely in Germany during the past year and has been able to gain a first-hand impression of religious conditions. The interview took place in the minister's home, partly destroyed during an Allied bombing raid.

The German churchman, whose name and location must be withheld, said: "You will not believe me if I tell you that this last year has been the happiest and most blessed of my whole life. In these times, it is great to be a Christian. Self-complacency is giving place to complete devotion to the life of the parish, and there is a very earnest seeking for the meaning of life."

The German pastor claimed that attendance at parish conferences has reached an average of 2,000 persons and has sometimes been as high as 3,000.

"It is no longer necessary," he said, "to seek to attract interest. The people are coming where they can hear the message of the Gospel, despite bombings and also despite the secret police. Many pastors hold consultations that last all day and perhaps half the night."

"People of every sort come with questions they want answered. I myself have just had visits from a well-known doctor, an atheist, and a major in the SS Corps." (RNS)

## Author in this issue

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